



Swamped by your water bill?



Your neighbours switched to a water meter and saved money

In the Autumn of 2015, the City Council started a project to switch a number of residents on to water meters. One household who we helped live in Craister Court. Do read below to learn a little about them, how the meter was installed and how much they are now saving.

Most people pay for water in one of two ways:

1. using the rateable value of the property they live in
2. using the amount actually used as displayed on a water meter

If you do not have a water meter, you will be paying a fixed amount regardless of how much water you use. If you don't use a lot of water, you may be still be paying quite a lot of money.

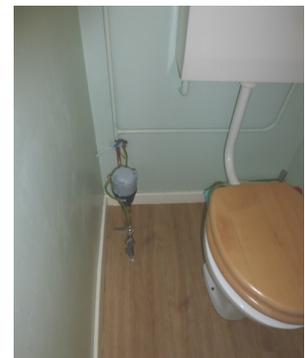
Address: Craister Court
Property: 3 bedroom house
Number in household: 2 adults



In Cambridge, Cambridge Water Company supplies our clean water. We also pay them for the removal of waste water. Water meters can only be installed by Cambridge Water (using their chosen plumbers) and the meters are the property of the water company.

Properties built before 1990 will not necessarily have water meters fitted. But it is free to have one fitted (in most situations) and they can be put into all types of properties. The residents in Craister Court had heard that it might be worth getting a water meter. They hadn't gone ahead because they thought they would be charged to have one installed, they were not sure of how to go about asking for one and they didn't know they could switch back to paying water rates if they were not saving money. After explaining the installation process, we made a rough estimate of their water use which showed that they should save money on a meter.

A water meter was requested by phoning Cambridge Water's customer services. They put us through to the plumbing company to book an appointment - just a couple of weeks later. At this appointment, the plumber was able to confirm that the meter would be free and he was able to fit the meter in the downstairs cloakroom (see photo). It is possible to read the meter but as it can be read from outside the house (using wireless technology), the residents do not need to do this themselves.



Installing the water meter took about an hour. During this time the water had to be turned off, and there was a little smoke from soldering the pipes. The plumber then explained to the residents how to read the meter, and that Cambridge Water would read it from outside their house every six months.

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Within a couple of weeks, the residents had received a new bill from Cambridge Water. This confirmed that they were now on a water meter and showed an actual reading - Cambridge Water had already done a reading to make the adjustments.



Based on how much water the residents have used in the first five months, we have estimated that they will save over £150 per year (⅓ off their old bill).

We are continuing to monitor their water use - taking readings every month - so we have a clear record of how much money they will save in a year. We have also given them hints and tips on how to save water, and shown them the free water saving devices they can get from Cambridge Water.



The residents said:

"We found the process very simple and swift. To-date we have saved as estimated and are pleased with that result."

You can apply to Cambridge Water to have a water meter if:

- * you pay the water bills
- * you live in your own home or a rented home (with the landlord's permission)
- * you pay for water based on either the rateable value of your property or assessed rates
- * you live in a house or a flat

You can opt to switch back to paying water rates if you are not saving money on a water meter, as long as you inform Cambridge Water within 1 year of the meter being installed.

You should save money on a water meter if there are 1 or 2 people in the household and you may save money if there are 3 - especially if you are careful with how much water you use.

Once you have a water meter, you may be eligible for special tariffs from Cambridge Water if you have certain medical conditions or you are on particular benefits.

Contact Cambridge Water on 01223-706050 to switch to a water meter. Or if you would like our help, please contact Philippa or Elizabeth on 01223-457676 or email us at philippa.hughes@cambridge.gov.uk or elizabeth.bruce@cambridge.gov.uk

For more information go to:

<http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/customers/water-in-the-home>

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/reducing-water-use>

<http://www.waterwise.org.uk/pages/how-to-save-water.html>